# ASTERISK

MORIMOTO SHUU

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ASTERISK
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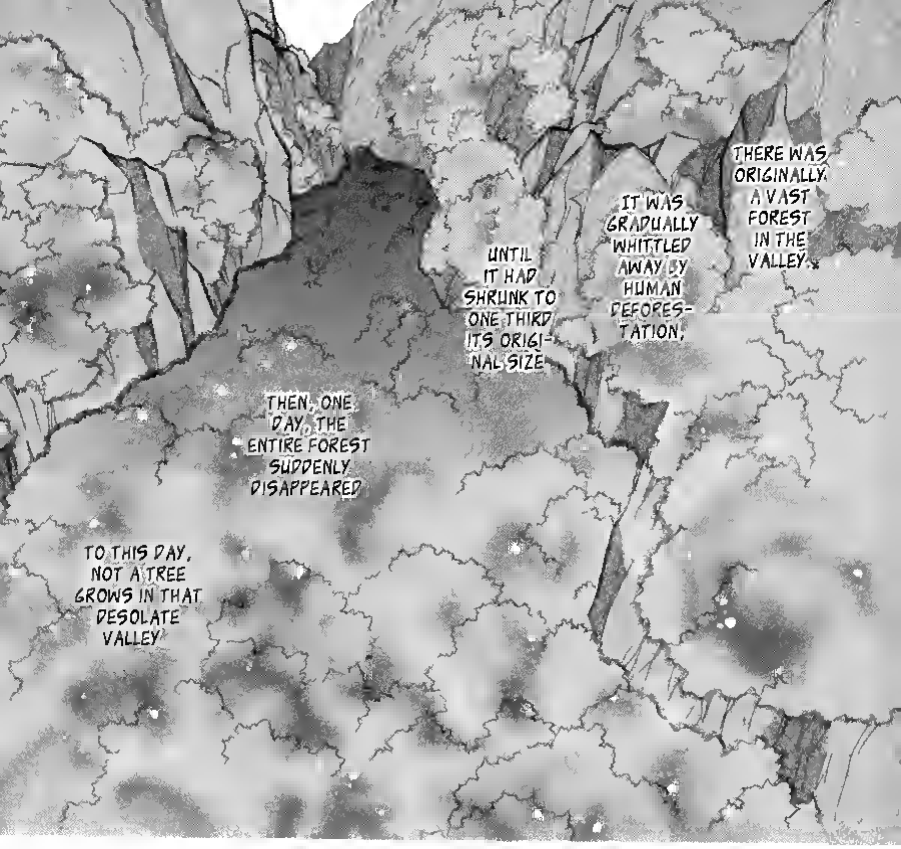
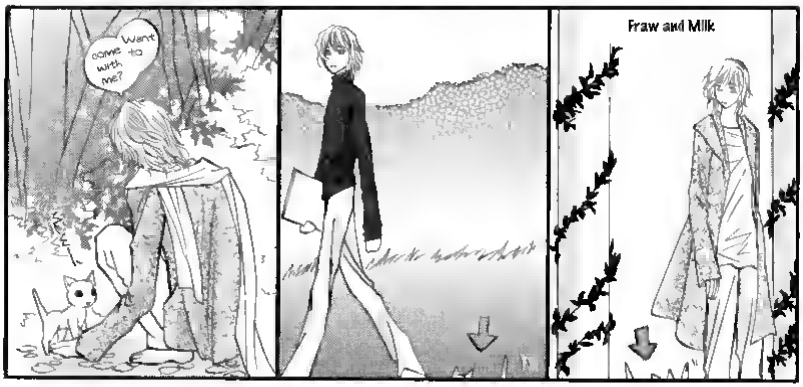

THERE WAS ORIGINALLY A VAST FOREST IN THE VALLEY.
IT WAS GRADUALLY WHITTLED AWAY BY HUMAN DEFORES-TATION,
UNTIL IT HAD SHRUNK TO ONE THIRD ITS ORIGI-NAL SIZE
THEN, ONE DAY, THE ENTIRE FOREST SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED
TO THIS DAY, NOT A TREE GROWS IN THAT DESOLATE VALLEY


Want to come with me?
Fraw and Milk

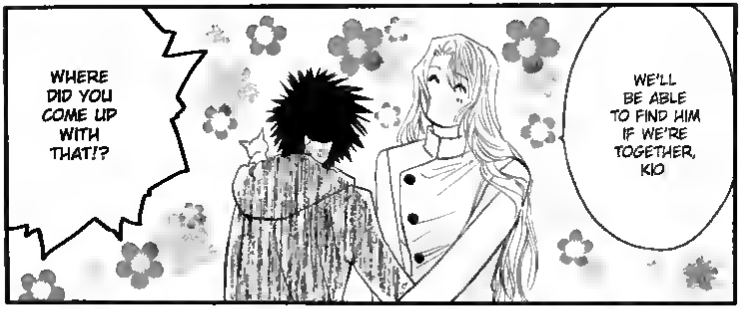
SINCE THEY DON'T COME HERE, ANGELS DON'T EITHER.
HUMANS ABANDONED THIS PLACE.
AS FOR ME, I FIRST LEARNED OF IT WHEN I BECAME ONE OF THE SEVEN ANGELS
SO IT MAKES SENSE THAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT, KIO
Rustle

IT'S CALLED...
THE "TREE RIVER VALLEY".
THAT FOREST THAT DISAP-PEARED FROM THE EARTH...

SO THE FOREST STRETCHED STRAIGHT TO THE END, HUH
PROB-ABLY...
UP UNTIL 300 YEARS AGO, THAT IS.
BUT IT'S NOT THAT THE TREES JUST VANISHED, IT'S THAT THEY WERE HIDDEN AWAY IN A DIMENSION THAT HUMANS CAN'T SEE
—SO WE'LL BE ABLE TO FIND THE ENTRANCE IF WE LOOK AROUND, RIGHT?
MAYBE... THE PEOPLE OF THE TREE RIVER SHOULD KNOW
Huh?

I THOUGHT YOU TOOK THE JOB BECAUSE YOU KNEW, FRAW!?
Angel World
A short time ago
THE TREE RIVER VALLEY ...?
THE PEOPLE OF THE TREE RIVER REALLY HATE OUTSIDERS.
humans most but angels too
BUT WHY IS GREEN THERE?
HE'S ALWAYS HAD A TENDENCY TO WANDER OFF INTO DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS.
FRAW!?
BUT WHO KNOWS HOW LONG IT'LL BE BEFORE HE LEAVES...
SHOULD I GO AFTER HIM?
GREG, IF YOU GO YOU'LL WIND UP FIGHTING.
I'LL GO.
—WELL, FRAW'S THE ONLY ONE OF THE SEVEN THAT HASN'T HAD ANY CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE TREE RIVER.
HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO TALK WITH THEM CIVILLY, YES?

HEY, HOLD IT—
SOUNDS GOOD! I THINK KIO WILL DO.
You're biased
I'LL DO IT AS LONG AS I CAN BRING ..
AN ATTEN-DANT.


WHERE DID YOU COME UP WITH THAT!?
WE'LL BE ABLE TO FIND HIM IF WE'RE TOGETHER, KIO

Eeeek!

CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
SOME-ONE IS FALL-ING!
CRASH
CRASH
CRASH
Eeeek!
FLOAT
ARE YOU OKAY?
UM..
AH..

YES. .
crumble
crumble
AN ANGEL ...?
Whsh
THEN..
WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING OUT HERE!
slide
THEY DO EXIST, SIS.
...ARE YOU OF THE TREE RIVER VALLEY ...?
YES...

THE CHIEF TOLD YOU NOT TO LEAVE THE VALLEY ON YOUR OWN.
IF YOU CAN SEE US..
—ARE YOU ANGELS?
I'M FRAW, ONE OF THE SEVEN ANGELS.
WE'VE COME TO ASK A FAVOR OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS VALLEY.

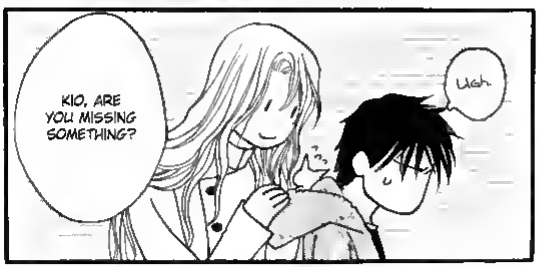
OUTSIDERS CAN'T ENTER THE VALLEY.
GO HOME.
WE'D LIKE YOU TO PUT US IN CONTACT WITH GREEN, WHO WANDERED INTO THE TREE RIVER VALLEY.
WAIT...!
IF YOU'D LET US SEARCH FOR HIM, JUST TO MAKE SURE.
BE SILENT!
GREEN IS...
LET'S GO.
PLEASE... LET US LOOK FOR HIM.
OH...
Slide
sorry

Ah!
zip

WHSH
wait
KIO

IF YOU RUSHED IN THERE AFTER THEM, YOU'D ONLY GET THEM ANGRIER AT YOU.

FORGET IT IT'S SAID THAT THE ENTRANCE TO THE VALLEY MOVES CONSTANTLY
WHY DID YOU STOP ME?
She knew Green.
You can let go now


KIO, ARE YOU MISSING SOMETHING?
Ugh.

IS THIS IT? LET'S HAVE GREEN LOOK IT OVER.
HUH?
LOOKING FOR SOME TOE FRUIT.
BUT WHAT WERE YOU DOING OUT THERE?

FWSH
OKAY.
IT'S DANGEROUS "OUTSIDE", SO DON'T LEAVE AGAIN

HUH?
MEW

THIS WON'T DO EITHER?
GREEN, WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A BREAK?

Rustle

Twitch

Rustle
Rustle
EVERY LAST THING HERE WILL SUFFER, OTHERWISE.
NO,
I HAVE TO FIND A MEDICINE TO REPLACE THE TOE FRUIT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
THANKS.
THEN... AT LEAST HAVE SOME TEA.
Well go get some
THOSE WHO BREATHE TOO MUCH OF THAT AIR DEVELOP A HIGH FEVER AND COLLAPSE.
FIRST, THE BARK TURNS RED. THEN ROT SETS IN, AND A FOUL ODOR SEEPS OUT TO POLLUTE THE AIR AROUND IT.
THE TREE DISEASE IS SPREADING.
HUFF HUFF

Mew—
I DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW LONG IT'S BEEN SINCE I CAME HERE.
BUT THE DISEASE IS SPREADING SO QUICKLY IT SCARES ME.
I HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO STOP THE DECAY QUICKLY.
HUH?
YOU'RE
HSSSSSSSS
AH!
SHE REALLY IS THE ONE FROM BACK THEN!?
HOW'D YOU GET HERE—
Ah!
TURN

STOP! THE AIR OVER THERE IS—
BOLT
HOLD IT! It's really dangerous there!

HEY, DID YOU COME HERE WITH SOME-ONE?
PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME!
TH... THERE YOU ARE!
Rustle
Rustle

FOUND IT
SILK'S COME CLOSE TO THE "ENTRANCE".
Huh?
LET'S GO, KIO.

FWSH
WHERE ARE ..
WHAT!?
GREEN!
There you are, Silk!
YOU REALLY DID COME OUT OF THE TREE .
Two of you, this time

TONK
GREEN!
ARE YOU THAT AFRAID OF ANGELS?
HE'S GOT TO BE SHOCKED AT US APPEARING OUT OF NOWHERE
GREEN, ARE YOU OKAY?!
FRAW.. HE'S GOT A HIGH FEVER.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

FWSH
LEAVE HIM HERE AND GO.
THIS PLACE ISN'T FOR ANGELS.
GREEN IS AN ANGEL, TOO.
THAT MAN DENIES BEING AN ANGEL,
AND TOLD US HE WANTS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU GUYS
PLUS, HE'S FOCUSED ON TREATING THE TREES.
WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER

IT'S THE ANGELS WHO TEND TO HUMANS WHO ARE OUR ENEMIES.
I GET IT...
THEY MUST KNOW THAT HUMANS VERY NEARLY STOLE THE FOREST THEY'D ALWAYS PROTECTED.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
HUH?
THE TREES ARE RUSTLING!!
KIO...
..YEAH

FRAW, TAKE GREEN.
You too, Silk.
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU...
WE'LL TALK LATER, TIME TO GET AWAY FROM HERE
TALK...!?
YURAI! O... OVER THERE!
The ground!
SLIT HER

GET AWAY FROM HERE!
CRUSH
HUH!?
GLITTER
I CAN'T CALL OUT A FEATHER...!?
WHAT ...?!

EEEK
GRAB
EEEK
SWIPE
WE CAN'T USE FEATHER TECHNIQUES IN THIS WORLD?!
MY WINGS, TOO.!
— THAT MEANS I HAVE TO DO THIS BY BRUTE FORCE!?

EACH MANIFIS DOESN'T HAVE MUCH POWER, BUT...
THIS IS HARDLY A NORMAL AMOUNT OF THEM!
ARE YOU OKAY?
GREEN!
THE MANIFIS ARE GATHERING AROUND KIO!
GYAAA
Eeek

WHAT ARE THOSE?!
FROM THE GROUND...
HOW LONG HAVE THOSE THINGS BEEN THERE...!
AND THAT ANGEL...
IS DESTROYING THEM!?
SLAM
SLASH
THAT'S... KIND OF DANGEROUS, RIGHT?
Ugh!

ARE YOU OKAY?
THANKS
PHEW
THE OTHERS?
THEY'RE FINE THESE THINGS ARE ALL AFTER YOU, KIO
HUH!? WHY?
PROBABLY INSTINCT..
SINCE YOU'RE A HIGH-POWERED ANGEL.

I was serious!
THIS ISN'T WORKING.
THEY'VE PROBABLY LATCHED ONTO THE TREE ROOTS.
THEY WENT FOR THE GUY WHO LOOKED LIKE THE SOFTER TARGET.
Ah!
THE OPPOSITE, I BET.
LET'S GO.
AS MUCH AS YOU NEED.
YEAH, LEND ME SOME OF YOUR POWER ...
PURIFY THE GROUND.

BOOOM
SLAM
THE... THE GROUND IS SHAKING!
What the!?
AAAH!

YEAH
...THEY'RE GONE.
FIGURES, I'M WIPED.
KIO
HUFF—
SSSS
Tremble
Tremble
crumble
WHAT WAS THAT SHAKING, BEFORE?
Are you okay, Yuri?
THE DISEASED PATCHES HAVE RETURNED BACK TO NORMAL ...!?

YEAH, EVERY-THING'S ALRIGHT NOW.
ALRIGHT..? THOSE DARK RED THINGS IN THE EARTH WERE MANI-FIS, RIGHT..?
THOSE THINGS HAVE NEVER ONCE COME HERE BEFORE..
Ah!
MAYBE THEY FOL-LOWED THE ANGELS IN!
OR MAYBE THEY BROUGHT THEM ON PURPOSE, TO DESTROY THEM AND GAIN OUR TRUST!
DON'T BE RIDICU-LOUS!
YOU THINK THAT'LL FOOL US!?
YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG!
THIS ISN'T THE ANGELS' FAULT.

CHIEF.
THOUGH WE'RE SEPARATED FROM EARTH, THIS LAND WAS ORIGINALLY THE SAME AS EARTH
EVEN NOW, IT'S CONNECTED AT SOME POINT.
THERE'S NO WAY TO COMPLETELY SEVER TIES.
THANK YOU, ANGELS
...EVEN AFTER EVERYONE HAS BEEN SO RUDE
NO, IT WAS NOTHING
WE APOLOGIZE FOR COMING HERE WITHOUT AN INVITATION.

I ALSO HAVE TO THANK GREEN FOR HELPING US TREAT THE TREE DISEASE.
Are you okay?
Oh, no
!!!
HOWEVER, WE TRULY CAN'T WELCOME YOU ANGELS HERE.
COLLECT YOUR COMRADE AND DEPART.
Thank you so much.
Huh? But I'm still
And plus, I'm not an angel
You've done enough.
But!
A GOOD NUMBER OF THE TREES HERE ARE DISEASED!
GREEN WAS TREATING THEM?
YES. THIS BAD ODOR IS THE REASON PEOPLE ARE COMING DOWN WITH FEVERS.
CHIEF, WE'VE FOUND SOME TOE FRUIT.
OH, REALLY?
Green confirmed it was them.
BUT THEY'RE IN A REALLY HARD PLACE TO GET. SO WE ONLY HAVE THESE..

I'll go too
LET'S GO COLLECT SOME MORE.
YEAH, LET'S GO!
YOU'VE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE
Go home.
No.
But I don't know where "home" is.
I CAN'T JUST IGNORE THIS SITUATION AND GO HOME.
IF THIS TREE DISEASE IS THE SOURCE OF IT, THEN PLEASE STOP ARGUING AND LET US HELP.
LET'S HURRY AND FIX THINGS.
YOU DON'T LOOK SO GREAT, CHIEF. AND THERE ARE MORE SICK PEOPLE ELSEWHERE, RIGHT?

◆ ASTERISK 14 / END ◆

HUH? REALLY?
YOU'VE GOT THE BASICS DOWN NOW.
FASTER THAN I FIGURED, TOO
NEXT YOU'LL PROGRESS BY GETTING USED TO THE MANIFIS ON EARTH.
AL-READY!?
YOU LEARN FASTEST THAT WAY, ANTE. I'LL HAVE YOUR BACK
OH NO, I'M FINE
WHAT? IT'S NORMAL TO BE AFRAID. IF YOU WANT TO GIVE UP NOW..
—
SO DEAN, YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE UP TEACHING?
WELL, AFTER I'M DONE WITH YOU
I'D ALWAYS TRAVELLED ALONE.
IT REALLY MEANT A LOT TO ME, THE REASSURANCE OF TRAVELING TOGETHER.